House Probers Do Not Plan To Recall Ray, Chairman Says

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The House Assassinations Committee does not plan to hear any more testimony from James Earl Ray, who first confessed to the murder of Martin Luter King Jr. and now claims he is innocent, a spokesman said today.

Committee Chairman Louis Stokes (D-Ohio.) said the panel had decided, "No useful purpose would be served" in calling Ray back to the stand from his cell in Brushy Mountain Prison in Petros, Tenn..

Ray, now serving a 99-year sentence in the 1968 Memphis murder, testified at hearings in October, claiming he was the "fall guy" in a conspiracy headed by a man he identified only as Raoul. Raoul, if he exists, has never been found.

Stokes said the committee at two closed sessions yesterday reviewed Ray's testimony and depositions he has made at various times and "decided not to call Mr. Ray."

He said the committee today sent a letter to Ray and his attorney, Mark Lane, saying if the convict had anything further to say, the committee is open for written communication which will be inserted into the record.

Lane yesterday told reporters Ray would testify next Thursday. The attorney claims to have evidence that former and acting members of the FBI actually killed King.

A committee spokesman said Lane had failed to produce any such evidence.

A former Scotland Yard detective told Congress yesterday he was convinced Ray murdered King because Ray was a "racist" who thought he would become a national hero by slaying a black leader.

Retired Chief Inspector Alexander Eist, however, acknowledged Ray "never really told me he pulled the trigger" killing King in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

The British detective, now a pub keeper, told the committee of his conversations with Ray while guarding him in a prison cell after his arrest at London's Heathrow Airport in June 1968.

Later, five firearms experts testified they could not certify the mashed bullet fragment removed from King's body was actually fired from the 30-caliber rifle found bearing Ray's fingerprints in a cheap boarding house opposite the balcony on which King was killed.

The FBI also had failed to link the cartridge conclusively with the rifle.

The committee reconvened yesterday for the first of several days' testimony on the King slaying.

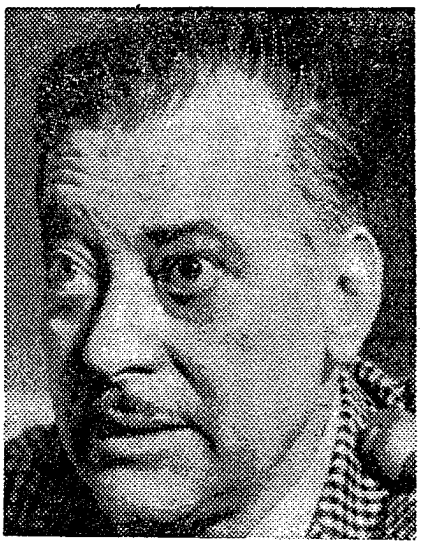
The panel is to release a report on the King case and the murder of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Nov. 22, 1963, by the middle of next month. The panel goes out of business at year's end.

Eist, 49, said Ray at first did not want to say anything after his arrest on a false passport and handgun charge.

But during his weeks in custody Ray became more conversational and told Eist he was trying to get to Africa "to kill some more blacks. It was very obvious to me he was anti-black — the derogatory terms he used — nigger," Eist said.

"He never really told me he pulled the trigger (on King) but in fact told me he had thrown the gun away and was worried about his fingerprints on it," Eist said.

Ray seemed elated about the publicity surrounding the King assassination, Eist said, adding the suspect was confident he could avoid conviction in a Southern court.



Alexander Eist UPI Telephoto

House Committee Will Question Ray's Brother

Jerry Ray, brother of James Earl Ray, has been subpenaed to appear before the House Assassinations Committee Nov.30, he told The News-Sentinel today.

House investigators revealed yesterday that they are renewing their probe for the truth in James Earl's confessions and denials that he killed Dr.Martin Luther King in 1968 at Memphis.

Jerry Ray, asked why he was being called, said:

"I've been told the committee wants to explore allegations that James Earl and I engaged in two Midwest bank robberies to provide money for an escape for James Earl after the King assassination. I wasn't involved in any such robberies and in one city the police gave me a clean bill of health."